any mental perversion in himself, he discovered that a tricksy elf of desire had attracted him to the belief in this calling, and that he must free himself of the greatest passion of his heart and bid it farewell. The painful conviction, tearing and gnawing at his vitals, that it was necessary to bid farewell, finds full expression in the character of Tasso. Over Tasso, that Werther intensified, hovers the premonition of something worse than death, as when one says: " Now it is over, after this farewell: how shall I go on living without going mad? " These two fundamental errors of his life gave Goethe, in face of a purely literary attitude towards poetry (the only attitude then known to the world), such an unembarrassed and apparently almost arbitrary position. Not to speak of the period when Schiller (poor Schiller, who had no time himself and left no time to others) drove away his shy dread of poetry, his fear of all literary life and craftsmanship, Goethe appears like a Greek who now and then visits his beloved, doubting whether she be not a Goddess to whom he can give no proper name. In all his poetry one notices the inspiring neighbourhood of plastic art and Nature. The features of these figures that floated before him—and perhaps he always thought he was on the track of the metamorphoses of one Goddess—became, without his will or knowledge, the features of all the children of his art. Without the extravagances of error he would not have been Goethe—that is, the only German artist in writing who has not yet become out of date—just because he desired as little to be a writer as a German by vocation.